

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): A method for use in a conference arrangement comprising the steps of:

enabling a plurality of participants in a group to ~~participant~~ participate in an ongoing conference;

automatically collecting participation information of each of said participants in said group, by monitoring the states of all devices connected to said conference and making that information available to all participants without requiring participant generated explicit commands to do so;

automatically determining which of said participants in said group are currently active in said conference; and

dynamically displaying a visual representation indicating which of said participants in said group are active in said conference.

2. (original): The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of enabling participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said conference.

3. (original): The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said participants monitoring said conference to become active in said conference.

4. (original): The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

Claim 5 (cancel).

6. (original): The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically collecting information on whether said active participants have spoken in said conference.

7. (original): The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically collecting information regarding prior conference participation of each of said participants.

8. (original): The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said prior participation information includes at least whether a participant was active in the conference.

1 9. (original): The method as defined in claim 8 wherein said prior
2 participation information further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1 10. (original): The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said step of
2 collecting participation information includes a step of collecting information on whether
3 a participant has been active and/or an actual speaker in the conference during the
4 conference.

1 11. (currently amended): The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said
2 step of collecting participation information further includes a step of collecting said
3 participation information for prescribed intervals of said conference.

1 12. (original): The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said prescribed
2 intervals include at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day,
3 each minute of each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

1 13. (currently amended): Apparatus for use in a conference arrangement
2 comprising:

3 a set up unit to enable a plurality of participants in a group to ~~participant~~
4 participate in an ongoing conference;

5 ~~an information collection unit~~ a monitor to automatically monitor states of all
6 devices connected to said conference and making that information available to all
7 participants without requiring participant generated explicit commands to do so, and to
8 collect participation information of each of said participants in said group and to
9 automatically determine which of said participants in said group are currently active in
10 said conference; and

11 a display unit to dynamically display a visual representation indicating
12 which of said participants in said group are active in said conference.

1 14. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said set up unit
2 further enables participants of said group not currently active in said conference to
3 monitor said conference.

1 15. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit
2 further enables said participants monitoring said conference to become active in said
3 conference.

1 16. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit
2 further enables said participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

Claim 17 (cancel):

1 18. (currently amended): The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said
2 ~~information collection unit~~ monitor further automatically collects information on whether
3 said active participants have spoken in said conference.

1 19. (currently amended): The apparatus as defined in claim 18 wherein said
2 ~~information collection unit~~ monitor further automatically collects information regarding
3 prior conference participation of each of said participants.

1 20. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 19 wherein said prior
2 participation information includes at least whether a participant was active in the
3 conference.

1 21. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 20 wherein said prior
2 participation information further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1 22. (currently amended): The apparatus as defined in claim 21 wherein said
2 ~~information collection unit~~ monitor further automatically collects information on whether
3 a participant has been active and/or an actual speaker in the conference during the
4 conference.

1 23. (currently amended): The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said
2 ~~information collection unit~~ monitor further automatically collects said participation
3 information for prescribed intervals of said conference.

1 24. (original): The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said prescribed
2 intervals include at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day,
3 each minute of each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

Claims 25-29 (cancel).